

LET IT SHINE

The guy who hides his light
under a bushel ought to be told
to let it shine. He won't push
back the edge of darkness if
he waits to be noticed. Let it shine,
for god's sake, we need all the light
we can get.

You know damn well the guy
without a light nor even a bushel,
would give his eye teeth for just
a tiny candle. Then he might brag
about it until you thought it was
a torch. No objections from me,
at least he'd have something
worth a shout. And anyway,
as the Master said to his Ass,
It's all right to make the big noise
if you have no close neighbors.

SUBSCRIPTION TO SALVATION

What do you know,
this fellow who just knocked
on my door has a magazine
full of recipes for salvation.
I never knew if I was saved
or not and it's a little late
for me to start worrying now.
He said I should be re-born
but I don't know, we're
getting along pretty well,
paid the property taxes last week,
had the old bus tuned up for winter.
Just the Missus and me, the kids
have all flown the coop. We have
a highball before dinner, eat at
the Club on Friday nights, watch
football on Sunday pm -- I don't know
what I want to be reborn as.
I tried to make a little joke and said
I'd probably be reborn as a garter snake
and chase the girls out of
the strawberry patch. But he

gave me a sour look and walked away.
I'm sorry now I wasn't more polite
and let him finish saving me.

-- James Hearst

Cedar Falls IA

COYOTE

Approaching Elm Hoist bridge down a hill so long
& deep we could be entering hell a coyote runs
ahead of the truck. It's a bright & wonderful
morning. The coyote shines. He moves off the
road & up the clay embankment, stops & looks at us.

We stop & look at him. During this short minute
we discuss bounty, pelt price, beauty, whether or
not he's holding up a hind leg. & my friend who's
driving stopped. His younger brother would have
pushed right on.

THE TUSKED BURROWERS

In the silt & marl bottoms the burrowing nymphs
live a life unnoticed. Long-tusked dragons of a
river's underworld, they create their own current
with maribou gills. From where a man stands, fly
rod in hand, the river is a wild refuge from an
ex-wife who never calls. & only inches from his
feet the long-tusked dragons are slowly breathing
& flexing their jointed legs in a dance of great
determination.

-- Rick Penn

High Bridge WI